**Section 670.20 Voter Registration for WIC Applicants and Participants**

In accordance with the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (P.L. 103-31), all women applicants and participants of the WIC Local Agencies shall be informed of their rights concerning the application for voter registration and shall be given an opportunity to apply to register to vote when applying for services.

a) Procedures for Explanation of Rights and Presentation of Application

1) When an applicant/participant applies for WIC services or changes address at a Local Agency contracted with by the Department, the Local Agency staff shall:

A) Inform the applicant/participant of her rights to execute or decline to execute a voter registration application, as outlined in the State Board of Election's rule at 26 Ill. Adm. Code 215.

B) Provide the applicant/participant with a form that asks if she would like to register to vote and contains boxes which can be checked to indicate whether the applicant would like to register to vote.

C) Provide the applicant/participant with a voter registration application form supplied by the State Board of Elections unless the applicant/participant declines to apply to register to vote.

2) Staff shall not:

A) Seek to influence an applicant's/participant's political preference or party registration;

B) Display any such political preference or party allegiance;

C) Make any statement to an applicant/participant or take any action the purpose or effect of which is to discourage the applicant/participant from registering to vote;

D) Make any statement to an applicant/participant or take any action the purpose or effect of which is to lead the applicant/participant to believe that a decision to register or not to register has any bearing on the availability of services.

3) If the applicant/participant indicates either by checking the appropriate box or verbally (if she cannot write) that she wants to apply to register to vote, staff shall assist the applicant/participant in filling out the voter registration form. Each applicant/participant must be provided the same degree of assistance in completing the Voter Registration Application as is provided in the completion of WIC certification forms. The form shall then be mailed or hand delivered, in accordance with subsection (b), of this Section.

4) If the applicant/participant indicates by checking the appropriate box or verbally that she declines to apply to register, the staff shall ask her to sign the form and shall retain the form in accordance with subsection (c) of this Section.

5) If the applicant/participant does not check either box and does not communicate any choice, the staff shall treat the lack of choice as a declination, note that the applicant/participant did not indicate preference on the form and retain the form in accordance with subsection (c) of this Section.

6) Staff shall offer the applicant/participant an opportunity to apply to register to vote, as set out in subsection (a)(1) above, upon each certification, at each recertification and if a change of address occurs.

b) Procedures for registration. If an applicant/participant executes an application for voter registration, staff shall send it to the election authority of the location where the applicant resides within 10 days after the form is executed, pursuant to the State Board of Elections rule at 26 Ill. Adm. Code 215.

c) Declination Forms

1) The Local Agency shall retain the declination forms for two years after the execution of the form. The forms will be used for statistical reporting purposes only and the forms or the names of those persons who executed them shall not be released.

2) The declination forms shall be stored separately from the recipient's clinical records.

d) WIC Local Agency Certification. WIC Local Agencies shall certify to the Department annually that they were in compliance with the requirements of this Section and the applicable federal and State laws.